DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 375 603 EC 303 443

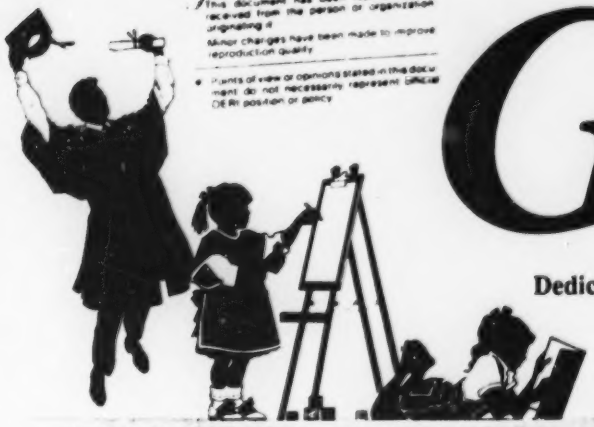
AUTHOR	Silverman, Linda Kreger, Ed.
TITLE	Talent Searches.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	20p.; In: Silverman, Linda Kreger, Ed.; Knopper, Dorothy, Ed. Understanding Our Gifted. Volume 6, Issues 1-6, September 1993-August 1994; see EC 303 439.
AVAILABLE FROM	Open Space Communications, Inc., 1900 Flosom, Suite 108, Boulder, CO 80302 (annual subscription for six issues: individual, $30; institutions, $35; international individual, $40; international institutions, $45).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Understanding Our Gifted; v6 n4 Mar-Apr 1994
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Ability Identification; Academic Aptitude; Elementary Secondary Education; *Gifted; Program Development; *Special Programs; *Student Development; Talent; Talent Development; *Talent Identification
IDENTIFIERS	*Talent Search

ABSTRACT

Talent searches are discussed in this journal theme issue, with two feature articles and several recurring columns. "Talent Search: A Driving Force in Gifted Education," by Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, defines what a talent search is, how the Talent Search was developed by Dr. Julian Stanley at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, the benefits of talent searches, research that supports talent search practices, the impact of talent search on general education, and the future of talent search programs. "University-Based Talent Searches for the Gifted," by Mark R. DeLong, describes the four regional talent search programs (Johns Hopkins University, Duke University, University of Denver, and Northwestern University) that have confederated their efforts in elementary and middle school ability identification and educational programming. In a special feature titled "My Best Summer," Michael Leviton describes his participation as a student in a Center for Talented Youth summer program. Regular columns present information on preventing underachievement in gifted students, problems that occur when schools do not recognize children's specific talents and interests, magnet schools as an ongoing talent search, literature resources, the need to recognize talents such as empathy, talent searches and the highly gifted, issues in development of talent search programs, and use of fairy tales to enhance creative thinking. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



ED 375 603

UNDERSTANDING OUR GIFTED®

Dedicated to helping gifted children reach their full potential

March–April, 1994

Volume 6, Issue 4

Talent Search: A Driving Force in Gifted Education

Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, Ph.D.

What is Talent Search?

When one uses the term "talent search" among a group of educators of the gifted it means something very specific. The term refers to an educational program carried out at four universities within the United States. Although the four programs have unique features, all of them conduct the talent search in basically the same way. Seventh and eighth grade students who score at the 95th percentile or above on a standardized achievement test register to take the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* (SAT) or the *American College Testing Program* (ACT). These tests are typically taken by high school students who are preparing to attend college. Historically, the tests were developed to predict college performance and to place students appropriately within the college curriculum. Younger students take them because they provide a better measure of their intellectual abilities than standardized achievement tests designed for their age. Based on students' scores on the SAT or ACT, various kinds of educational options and experiences, ranging from high level enrichment courses to subject and grade acceleration, are recommended. And participants are

(Continued on page 8)

FOCUS ON:
TALENT SEARCHES

INSIDE

SPECIAL FEATURE
My Best Summer
Michael Leviton.....18

Hidden Gifted Learner
Deirdre V. Lovecky.....3

Parenting the Gifted
Annemarie Roeper.....4

Instructional Perspectives
Shirley W. Schiever.... 5

The Reading Room
Stephanie Tolan..... 6

Kaleidoscope
Jim Delisle.....7

The Highly Gifted
Kathi Kearney..... 15

From Parent to Parent
Mary Lynn Baum..... 16

Creative Ventures and Encounters
Jerry Flack.....17

Current Developments in Gifted Education
Dorothy Knopper..... 19

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S. Kaspar
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

University-Based Talent Searches for the Gifted

Mark R. DeLong, Ph.D.

For about the past 15 years, gifted middle-school students throughout the United States have had opportunities to test their talents and follow their strengths in college-level academic programs offered by "talent search programs." Although colleges have long hosted groups of bright pre-college students in special programs—some offering college credit, it was only in the early 1980s that a handful of universities systematically brought together resources to identify, help to educate, counsel, and study academically talented youngsters. The organizations providing these comprehensive services are generally called "talent search programs" or just "talent searches." They are headquartered at Duke University (Durham, NC), the University of Denver, Northwestern University (Evanston, IL), and The Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD). Between these four talent searches, students throughout the entire United States have access to talent identification services, publications, and educational programs. During the past 15 years, about *one million* students have taken part in at least one of the talent search programs.

(Continued on page 11)

EC 303443

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FROM THE EDITOR

Happy Spring!

Here in the Rockies it's still snowing, but we continue to believe that Spring is in the air. In this issue, we bring you information about one of the most important advances in the discovery and education of gifted children: our nation's talent searches. Although "Talent Search" usually refers to the regional talent searches conducted at four major private universities, there are now literally dozens of additional talent searches sponsored by colleges and universities all over the United States. The talent searches provide an economical, standardized method for gifted teens and preteens to be identified through out-of-level testing. Many colleges are now offering advanced coursework in the summer and after school for talent search participants. Young people report finding new friends, developing responsibility, taking more challenging courses, and feeling better about themselves as a result of their participation in talent search.

In our lead articles, Paula Olszewski-Kubilius of the Midwestern Talent Search at Northwestern and Mark DeLong of the TIP program at Duke describe basic components of all the regional talent searches. In addition, Michael Leviton tells about his experience in a summer program sponsored by the Center for Talented Youth (CTY) of Johns Hopkins. The fourth regional talent search is sponsored by the University of Denver. All of these institutions share a common philosophy and similar eligibility requirements.

Over 150,000 youths participate in the four regional talent searches every year. That's astonishing! Think of what could happen if each student's family were to make a commitment to help all of our nation's gifted children. In no time, we would have a federal mandate protecting these children's welfare. And if each talent search participant determined in adult life to help the next generation of gifted children, there would be a Renaissance in our lifetime.

A key concept of all the talent searches, originating with Dr. Hal Robinson, is the need for an *optimal match* between a child's learning rate and the level and pacing of instruction. An optimal match is needed for gifted preschoolers as much as it is for gifted teens. Unfortunately, seventh grade is too late for many of our most highly gifted children to be recognized. Unless they are found early in life, they may become so turned off to an unappetizing diet of drill and repetition that they become underachievers—a condition which can last a lifetime. We are thankful for the talent searches, and hope that as they expand to reach elementary age children, they will enhance awareness and inspire educators of young children to provide an optimal match for the unique learning needs of this special population.

Linda Silverman

UNDERSTANDING OUR GIFTED®

Published by
Open Space Communications, Inc.

Publisher
Dorothy Knopper

Editor
Dr. Linda Kreger Silverman

Editorial Assistant
Barbara Gilman

Column Editors
Mary Lynn Baum, *Parent, Vancouver, British Columbia*

Dorothy Knopper, *Private Consultant for the Gifted, Boulder, Colorado*

Dr. Deirdre Lovecky, *Clinical Psychologist, Providence, Rhode Island*

Dr. Shirley Schiever, *Tucson Unified School District, Tucson, Arizona*

Stephanie Tolan, *Author and Consultant, Columbus, Ohio*

Dr. Lisa Wright, *Teachers College, Columbia University*

Advisory Board
Dr. Nicholas Colangelo, *University of Iowa*

Dr. James Delisle, *Kent State University*
Column Editor

Dr. Jerry Flack, *University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Colorado*
Column Editor

Dr. Holly Hultgren, *Principal, Boulder Valley Schools, Boulder, Colorado*

Dr. Nancy Jackson, *University of Iowa*

Kathi Kearney, *Founder, Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children, South Casco, Maine*

Elizabeth Meckstroth, *Counselor and Author, Chicago, Illinois*

Dr. Wendy Roedell, *Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, Puget Sound ESD, Seattle, Washington*

Dr. Annemarie Roeper, *Co-Founder of the Roeper City and Country School and Roeper Review*
Column Editor

Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, *College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia*

Understanding Our Gifted **(ISSN 1040-1350) is published bimonthly by Open Space Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 18268, Boulder, CO 80308-8268. Subscriptions are $30 for 1 year (6 issues). Canadian/foreign subscriptions are $40.00 U.S. funds. Institutions add $5 to rates shown. Back issues are $8.00; Canadian/foreign $10.00. Third class postage paid at Boulder, CO. Subscription inquiries should be sent to the publishing office. For subscription address changes, send mailing label along with new address to *Understanding Our Gifted*, 1900 Folsom, Suite 108, Boulder, CO, 80302, eight weeks before moving.**

Material in *Understanding Our Gifted* may be copied for personal use only. No material may be reproduced for publication without written permission of author and publisher. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright 1994, OPEN SPACE COMMUNICATIONS, INC. All rights reserved. Design by *Concepts Unlimited*.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Deirdre V. Lovecky

HIDDEN GIFTED LEARNER

Preventing Underachievement in Gifted Students

Many gifted students are trained for academic underachievement. No one intends this to be so, but it occurs when gifted children are presented with work that is too easy, repetitious and limited in scope. Even the most imaginative child cannot turn a typical phonics paper into a very interesting task. Given many such papers, children soon turn off. Over time, many do little work, and come to believe that school has little to offer in terms of real learning.

Some schools believe they offer gifted children the chance to go beyond the curriculum by initiating self-directed activities that take off from a curricular starting place. For example, if the class is studying whales, gifted children might, on their own, study and prepare a report on another aspect of marine mammal ecology. Unfortunately, many gifted children are not self-initiators; they need to be given specific instructions on what to do and how to do it. Other gifted children have already turned off by the time self-directed activities are offered. They have lost their ability to explore materials on their own, or to advance ahead of others; indeed, many have been previously punished for going ahead of the class. These "good" children will not so much as read ahead in an assigned novel. Given directions to do something on their own, they cannot think how to begin. The task seems overwhelming to them and they opt for easy, familiar work, with no surprises and no challenge. This group has learned not to accept risks. The third group of gifted children still learn on their own, but they do it entirely their own way. These prefer to have no interference in the topics they choose. They will only work on what they want, when they want. A good teacher can turn them on to learning for that year or that class, but there is little carry over to other areas. These students have decided that they will only do exactly what they wish. Thus, school work that is uninteresting to them, difficult or somewhat repetitious will not be attempted.

Children who are not self-initiators, or who have given up the chance to self-direct learning in order to do what is expected and easy, can be difficult to reach. However, it is possible to help such a child by carefully structuring the task to teach neglected skills, by specifying higher level expectations and how to reach them, and by finding some topics that match the child's interests.

It is much more difficult to help children who have decided to only self-initiate work that they wish to do. This sort of child resists adult intervention and can be stubborn about the belief that only what is liked is worth doing. Teaching such a child how to persist on less liked tasks, work hard to learn needed but less preferred skills, deal with obstacles that present themselves in understanding material or how to get through the boring parts of every task without losing interest, is a challenge for teachers and parents alike. In fact, it is important with this type of child to change some of the underlying beliefs about learning. Thus, while children who do not know how to self-initiate need activities that pique their interests so they can experience how rewarding is the satisfaction of learning for its own sake, the child who only self-initiates learning needs to give up some of the control and allow others to participate in the learning process. The overly self-initiating child has guarded learning as a sacred thing and needs to see that others can have important and valid input into the acquisition of skills and knowledge. This is best accomplished through a tutor/mentor who sets goals with the child, but who also critiques work and sets expectations for performance that the child has to stretch to reach.

It would be easier for all gifted children if learning from the start of school encompassed a variety of tasks and levels, allowed self-direction, yet set goals for achievement that challenged the child. It is easier to prevent underachievement than to remedy the patterns once they are set in primary school. Schools have an obligation to help gifted children reach their full potential.

Deirdre V. Lovecky, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in Providence, Rhode Island, and a frequent author of articles on giftedness in children and adults.

Annemarie Roeper

PARENTING

Talent Lost

David's mother consulted me because she was concerned about her son's grades. All he wanted to do was read, read, read. He reads adult books as well as *The New York Times*, but in school, he would only write one sentence book reports. Homework was a battle; David wouldn't concentrate on it since it was mostly repetition and drill. Writing was difficult; once it took him six hours to write half a page. When David came to see me, I was immediately impressed by his big, questioning grey eyes.

I usually give the children toys and games to play with, or paper to draw on. Then they are more able to relax and share their thoughts with me. I offered David Legos since I knew he loved them.

"I would rather talk," he said seriously without a smile. I asked him how his mother had explained his visit to me.

He replied, *"She said you would help me do my homework better."* Actually his mother and I had discussed the fact that he was not happy in school. But obviously his problem with homework was weighing heavily on him.

"Before we talk about that, I would like it very much if you could tell me a little about what you like to do and what you are interested in." His face lit up. We sat and talked for almost an hour.

"Last summer I went to a camp where we studied the Middle Ages. We learned all about the knights and their armors; we learned about the clothes they wore, the food they ate. And we acted it all out and painted pictures about them."

"Did you get a chance to go swimming or play games?"

"No, it was a very small camp in someone's house and we were there because we were interested in the Middle Ages. I love swimming, but I didn't miss it. Acting and painting were so much fun."

His mother had told me about the camp and how the usually shy boy gave a wonderful performance as a knight in shining armor. Not only had he made the armor himself, he also participated in making the scenery. His parents discovered that he had talent both in acting and in art. They had learned about a side of him that was totally hidden. Nothing in his school experience allowed such talent to appear.

"Does your teacher know that you like the Middle Ages, acting and painting?"

"No, it's not important. I need to learn to concentrate on my homework."

"Do you dream about the Middle Ages when you are supposed to be doing your homework?"

"Yes, at school, too. I think about all the wars since then and the bombs...." A look of deep concern came over his face again. *"I wish I could stop it."*

"If your teacher would let you do things like you did in camp, would you be spending your time dreaming?"

"Oh, no, I know I would have no trouble. I do well in art and science classes."

"What if she asked you to go to the library and find out more about the knights in the Middle Ages and then write about it? Would you be able to do that homework?"

"I think I could, but my writing is slow."

"Or if you could talk about it at school and act it out?"

"Nobody else would be interested. Besides, I have to read the books the teacher assigns."

"Do you think your trouble with school means that there is something wrong with you because you are not happy and cannot make yourself do your homework?"

"Yes," he said. *"It is my problem. My parents think so too."* His parents had been told by camp counselors that their son had an unusual talent in acting. Yet, because of pressure from the school, they concentrated on the homework which resulted in difficulties for the whole family. In my session with the parents I suggested that the problem was not with David, but with the expectations of the school; he needed an environment which would recognize and include his talents and interests, and even his concerns, in their program.

Many young children have specific talents and interests, but if they go to a school that does not value creativity, by the time they reach third grade they submit to outside expectations and lose their creativity in art, drama, storytelling, dance and other areas. At times these children feel burdened with not being able to live up to others' expectations and being distracted by the inner pressure of creativity. Even outstanding math students lose their excitement about math when they are not allowed to learn math at their own rate, but are focused on their slowness in reading instead.

The first priority for parents should be to support their child's own agenda, interests and abilities. Actually, against that background of support children are more likely to learn missing skills. If we do not support their interests and talents, they may never be realized and the children may feel unfulfilled.

Parents are called upon to be their children's advocates by giving them opportunities to discover their talents —either by finding a school that offers a curriculum which includes opportunities for personal growth in areas other than skills or by influencing the existing school situation to honor their child's talents and interests.

***Note:** I would be glad to answer letters or talk with families in this situation.*

Dr. Annemarie Roeper is a consultant on the gifted in Oakland, California, and author of the book, ***Educating Children for Life.*** Co-founder of the Roeper City and Country School and the ***Roeper Review***, Annemarie has inspired a worldwide focus on global awareness in gifted education.

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Magnet Schools

A magnet school may function as an ongoing talent search by virtue of its unique focus, student body, and curriculum. In this column, I will discuss four ways in which this search may be activated: by interviewing incoming students, offering survey or rotation classes, bringing professionals into the school, and through after-school interest groups or clubs.

The interview process can be set up as follows: prior to the beginning of the school year, incoming or prospective students attend a presentation that highlights the special classes available in the school. Teachers of representative classes explain what is taught in the classes and display examples of student products. Productions of dance, music or drama can be videotaped for ease of presentation. Following the presentation, students are interviewed (briefly) to determine their area(s) of interest and experience or expertise. They indicate at least first and second choice interests.

Survey or rotation classes offer students who have no consuming interest in areas related to the focus of the school an opportunity to discover new interests and develop previously unknown talents. Through exposure to and instruction in a topic, students may become "turned on" to the vistas opened for them. One shining example of this process is a male Hispanic youth who, on entering middle school had no knowledge of, or exposure to, dance. Through a rotation class, he discovered a talent that led to a scholarship at a top school of dance. Now in his third year at this school, he expresses his love for dance and excitement at the promising career ahead of him. Were it not for a fine arts rotation class, he might never have found this fulfillment, and the world could not enjoy the beauty of his dancing.

A magnet school not only attracts students, it also seems to draw community members with expertise or consuming interest in the areas of focus. Engineers gravitate to math/technology magnets, professors and other scientists to science magnets, and artists of every description to a fine arts magnet. Many times these people volunteer their services without being asked, and seem to be more than willing to participate in the educational process when asked. Students who believe that teachers do not know much about the "real world" give credence to "real" professionals. Through such credence, interest may be sparked and talent discovered; a guest speaker may serve as a talent scout.

After-school clubs or interest groups naturally spring from the interests and strengths of the school staff. At a magnet school, these clubs may serve as one more way to discover talent. A model club is less threatening than a class in design, a choral club less than a class in voice. Within a relatively small group and without a concern for evaluation and grades, students may discover strengths they never dreamed they possessed. A club can serve as a sheltered environment for the discovery of interests and talents. The leader of such a group has a rare opportunity to observe and nurture budding genius when it manifests itself.

Magnet schools make delightful and valuable contributions to the educational milieu of a community. In addition to broadening educational horizons and offering depth of study, they can serve as one more way in which a community may discover the varied talents of its youth.

Shirley W. Schiever, Ph.D., is a curriculum specialist at the Fine Arts Magnet School in Tucson, Arizona, and the author of ***A Comprehensive Approach to Teaching Thinking***.

Stephanie S. Tolan

THE READING ROOM

Many young readers choose books by genre, by subject matter, by the look of the book jacket or the story summary on the jacket flap. Though they may be able to tell you the title of their favorite book(s), they may not know the author's name. It is important to remind children that an important way to choose books is by author. Some books are part of a series, like the *Bagthorpe Saga* by Helen Cresswell, or the *Anastasia books* by Lois Lowry, and others, like some of Madeleine L'Engle's and Cynthia Voigt's, have minor characters from one novel as major characters in another. But even when an author writes unrelated and extremely varied works, readers who enjoy one book are highly likely to enjoy the others.

Among the somewhat lesser-known writers whose work, because of its depth and complexity, is especially appealing to gifted children are Peter Dickinson, Margaret Mahy, William Sleator, and Zibby O'Neal, who have been represented in earlier Reading Room discussions. Today we focus on Margaret Mahy, a prolific and highly regarded New Zealand writer, whose works for middle grade readers and young adults offer intellectual challenge, lush style and quite often an unusual and intriguing blend of realism and fantasy.

Dangerous Spaces, Viking, 1991, involves two cousins, Anthea and Flora, of very different temperament and background, thrown together by the sudden death of Anthea's parents. The narrative moves back and forth between the quirky daylight world of Flora's family, and the strangely compelling world of Anthea's story-like dreams. There is a ghost; more precisely there are two ghosts, one who inhabits the dream world and so is known to Anthea, and the other who inhabits the real house, and is known (at least perceived) by Flora. In the end, the two worlds and the two girls and the two ghosts must come together if Anthea's life is to be saved. A compelling and unusual story.

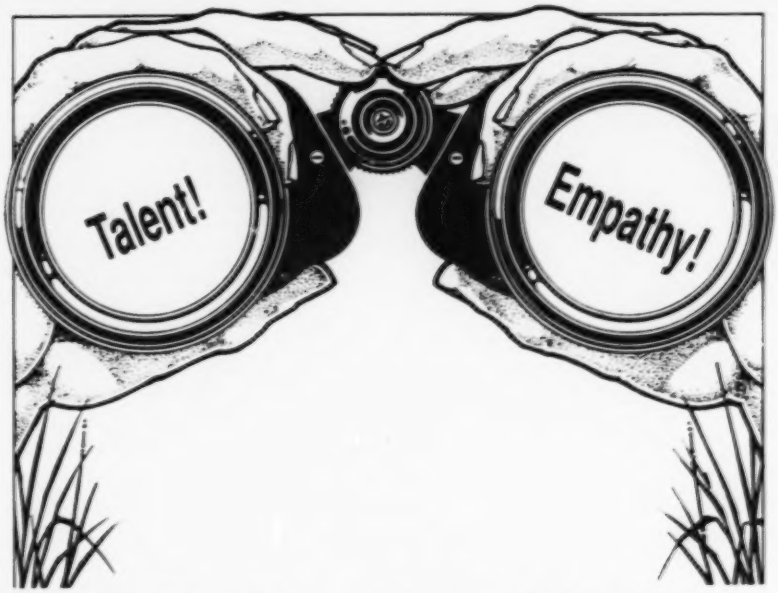
Underrunners, Viking, 1992, is the story of Tristram, an intensely imaginative boy who lives on a wild and desolate New Zealand peninsula with his creative but irresponsible father (his mother has run away to Australia and taken their car) and Winola, an equally imaginative girl living temporarily in the Children's Home nearby. The book begins as a sort of light, imaginative romp as the two meet and share pretend adventures with Selsey Firebone (the intergalactic detective Tristram imagines inhabiting his body) against the Veng (acid-spitting aliens) and other villains from the B.I.C. (Bureau of Intergalactic Cruelty). They hide out and explore in the "underrunners," natural caves and tunnels beneath the tall, late summer grasses. Little by little the reader realizes that Winola's history (her mother has several times tried to commit suicide) is dark indeed, and that the man she believes is after her is both real and genuinely dangerous. The story is funny and suspenseful, light and dark, as the children must shed their make-believe perils and make-believe powers and fend for themselves with all the internal tools they can muster.

Like all of Mahy's work, these two novels are full of extraordinary, tough, vibrant characters. For American readers the New Zealand setting adds a further exotic touch. And the stories, whatever the elements of fantasy or adventure, center on fundamental human issues about caring, belonging, and developing an identity. In addition to her middle grade and young adult fiction, Mahy has written many delightful, funny and intensely original picture books, so children can begin with her work at the very start of their literary experience and make a friend for life.

Stephanie Tolan, from Columbus, Ohio, is a noted author of children's books and one of the authors of the award-winning book, ***Guiding the Gifted Child.***

KALEIDOSCOPE

What is it We're Searching for, Anyway?



The month of May is usually a very busy one for me. It is the month that I am popular on the "6th grade circuit," speaking to hundreds of children who have recently taken the SAT as a part of one of our country's "talent search" programs. These freshly-scrubbed kids (and their equally-clean parents) sit in an auditorium where they are being recognized for their fluent abilities in mathematical or verbal skills. They range in age from 10-13 (the kids, not the parents!) and, as I wait to be introduced as the guest speaker, I sit in awe at the accomplishments of these boys and girls, many of whom scored better on the SAT at age 12 than I did at 17, and *definitely* higher than I would score now at 40. They are the academic cream of the crop of their generation, proof positive that intelligence is as varied among children as are shoe size, hair color and personality types.

As I move toward the podium, the applause I receive is less in recognition of my academic credentials than it is for the fact that I once appeared with Oprah Winfrey on TV. That's OK. Kids, like adults, often acknowledge that which is most familiar to them. My talk begins with a cartoon about a kid doing so well in school that even the teachers don't know how to help—a situation that is far more humorous on the funny pages than it is in real life. I move quickly into a reminder that gifted students don't always have to get straight A's—"less than perfection is more than acceptable"—and then tell them that it is common for gifted kids to have friends who are chronologically younger or older than they. I make each of these points with a combination of bad jokes, solid research and personal example, hoping beyond hope to keep the attention of my audience, who range in age from 6-year-old siblings to 70-year-old grandmas.

Throughout my talk, I find myself telling these extremely capable children a lot of "OK" things: *"It's OK to act silly"; "It's OK to know (or to not know) what you want to be when you grow up"; "It's OK to ask deep questions that have no firm answers"; "It's OK to be you, whoever that happens to be."*

My 45 minutes evaporate quickly and I finish my talk with a reminder to parents that the greatest gift they can give their kids is the gift of their own time; too, I remind the students to be patient with their moms and dads—after all, they're still learning how to be parents.

Applause, applause. I retake my seat. If I'm lucky, some people will come up and talk to me privately. If I'm real lucky, it'll be some kids.

I return to my hotel or the airport, and it's usually in those transient places that I recognize anew that the most important talents these children possess are not—indeed, **cannot** be—measured by the SAT or any other test. Though important, all these high scores tell me is that the kids are quick, sharp and academically capable; but a 720 SAT math tells me little about the nature or depth of their true talents, such as how much they care about each other, how much they like and respect themselves, and in what ways they want their lives to matter, now and in the minutes, months and years that lie ahead.

Perhaps in some future year, some yet-to-be-seen month of May, I'll be asked to talk to a group of freshly-scrubbed kids and parents in celebration of a talent search devoted to empathy or human relations or how enthusiastically kids have tried to make their world a better place to live. If this were to happen, I'll see it as the most significant speech I ever gave. In fact, I think I'll even invite Oprah Winfrey.

Jim Delisle, Ph.D., teaches at Kent State University and is the author of five books including ***Guiding the Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Youth*** (Longman, 1992).

eligible for many programs designed especially for them. All of this occurs for over 150,000 students annually, ages 13 or 14 years old.

How Talent Search Began. The talent search grew out of Dr. Julian Stanley's search for a test to measure the mathematical reasoning abilities of exceptional children. He discovered the value of the SAT for this purpose. In 1972, Dr. Stanley and his colleagues at The Johns Hopkins University began administering the SAT to groups of students from broader geographic areas around Baltimore. Eventually, this process became systematized into the talent search. Dr. Stanley founded the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY) to continue his research of bright children. The Center for Talented Youth (CTY) was created at Johns Hopkins University to conduct the talent search (in both verbal and mathematics domains) in the northeastern and eventually the southwestern regions of the country. Other sites replicated the basic operations developed by Stanley and CTY and began talent searches in other regions of the U.S.: Duke University serves the south and southeast, Northwestern University serves the midwest and the University of Denver serves the northwest. [See map on Page 13.]

How is Talent Search Unique? The talent searches are different from most programs available to gifted children. First of all, they are conducted by universities rather than local schools. Talent searches are an "extra-educational" type of gifted program. Schools may notify children about the talent search, but parents and students typically make the decision about whether to participate. Yet, the results of the testing have important implications for the educational programs children should have in school.

Second, the talent searches deliver services to gifted children and their families on a regional basis. This means that the special characteristics of certain areas of the country can be incorporated into service delivery procedures. Also, educational programs that are within a reasonable geographic distance from children's schools and communities can be made available to them.

Benefits of Talent Search

Cost Effective and Efficient. Talent searches are cost effective and efficient ways of identifying children in need of special educational programs. For a total cost of under $50, students and parents receive information about their children's abilities that can be used to plan their entire school program from seventh through twelfth grade. Scores on the SAT or ACT can alert parents and educators to the need for early access to advanced courses, early entrance to high school and even college. Through the talent searches, students are readily notified about hundreds of summer and other extra-educational programs for which they may qualify. Because the testing occurs in groups, many more children can be accommodated than is possible with individual IQ testing. The cost is far less than that associated with private evaluations conducted by a licensed psychologist.

Based on Sound Educational Principles and Practices. The talent searches embody excellent and easy methods of identification and assessment. They utilize the practice of out-of-level testing, using a test designed for older children since the tests typically employed with younger children do not provide accurate assessments of their abilities. Most standardized achievement tests are designed to be given in relatively short periods of time to groups of students who vary greatly in their aptitude. As a result, most do not contain enough difficult test items to assess the abilities of bright children. On grade level achievement tests, most gifted students score extremely well. But even among these students there are different levels of ability. Tests written for older students do a better job of accurately measuring bright children's reasoning abilities. If a music teacher has a new student who already has some musical skill, the teacher may have the student play several pieces of increasing difficulty in order to gauge the student's capabilities and determine where to begin instruction. It is the same procedure with talent search testing. Students have already taken a test designed for their age group and performed almost perfectly. The SAT or ACT is the "more difficult piece" that will give a better picture of their reasoning abilities and subsequent instructional needs.

Consistent with Children's Development. With age, there is increasing differentiation of intellectual abilities, particularly during adolescence. Measures of global intelligence are more appropriate for younger children whose cognitive abilities are more highly inter-correlated. An older child's relative standing in one ability may bear little relationship to his or her standing in another ability. At adolescence, "generalized abilities are channeled into specific domains, and aptitude tests are considered better indicators of ability than intelligence tests" (Silverman, 1986, p. 139). The SAT, which involves two areas, and the ACT which involves four areas, help to ascertain students' abilities in important areas of academic aptitude.

Guides Educational Planning. The results of talent search testing tell educators and parents the specific academic areas in which students demonstrate aptitude (e.g., verbal, mathematical) and help them decide what kinds of courses and programs to pursue. Talent search is not an activity designed to separate the gifted from the nongifted. Its purpose is to provide

a more accurate assessment of the abilities of students who, by virtue of their scores on grade level achievement tests, are already considered gifted and talented. Thus, educational programming of a special kind is required for all students who participate—for those who score at the low end as well as the high end of the test. Recommendations for students scoring at different levels range from primarily enrichment to accelerative in nature and from mild acceleration (i.e., taking classes one or two years early) to more extreme forms of acceleration (i.e., markedly early entrance to college). Higher scores indicate that students can learn a subject more quickly and within a more compressed time frame. The value of talent search becomes clear if one considers what would happen to students without it. Students who score the same on grade level achievement tests, say at the 99th percentile, might have very different SAT scores. One student may score 350 on the SAT-Mathematics section while the other may score 650. Without the out-of-level testing, these students would be treated the same by their school district when in reality they require very different kinds of educational programs. One student needs enrichment classes in math and early access to algebra. The other student needs access to the entire precalculus curriculum, compression of four years of math into two years or less, and early access to college mathematics courses.

Higher scores indicate that students can learn a subject more quickly and within a more compressed time frame.

Promotes Programs. The talent search has led to a flowering of educational program models and opportunities designed to serve participants. These have taken many different forms: fast paced summer classes and Saturday programs, early access to Advanced Placement courses, enrollment of junior high students in high school courses, dual enrollment of high school students in college classes, correspondence courses for high school and college level courses, and early entrance programs for college. Each of the universities that conduct a talent search produces a compendium of educational programs within its region, and the number of programs grows annually.

Research Supports Talent Search

There is a great deal of research to support the practices underlying the talent search. Below is a sampling of research findings.

1. The two-tiered identification process involved in talent search is valid. It demonstrates that grade level achievement tests cannot discern levels of talent among high achieving students and that a cut-off at the 95th percentile on grade level achievement tests is both efficient and effective to choose students for further assessment. Using this percentile does not eliminate great numbers of students who could score well on the SAT nor does it subject many students to testing who then perform poorly on the test (Ebmeier & Schmulbach, 1989).

2. While the SAT was not initially designed for younger students, the test is not too difficult for them. The percentages of talent search students and high school students who score at the low end of the test (i.e., below 300 on SAT-M or SAT-V) are essentially the same, indicating that the younger students are not more likely to do poorly on the test (Wilder & Casserly, 1988). Most talent search students score above chance level on the test—i.e., higher than scores one would obtain from guessing, suggesting that most students are not overwhelmed by the test (Burton, 1988).

3. The talent search is successful in identifying students who demonstrate advanced academic abilities and achievement compared to other students. When they take the SAT in high school, these students continue to surpass other college bound seniors. They are more likely to take high school honors classes and Advanced Placement courses, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science; to accelerate in high school; to earn honors and awards; and yet to maintain active participation in extra-curricular activities. Their educational aspirations are extremely high (Burton, 1988).

4. Scores on the SAT in junior high are predictive of achievement ten years later and differences in SAT scores among talent search participants relate to differences in eventual academic achievement (Benbow, 1992).

5. Students who participate in accelerated classes subsequent to talent search are successful. They can learn material typically taught to older students at a faster pace, more appropriately matched to their learning rate, and learn it as well as students in more traditionally paced courses (VanTassel-Baska, 1986).

Talent Search Affects General Education

Talent search has had many positive effects on general education. The sheer number of students participating annually in talent search and in special summer and other kinds of academic programs has brought attention to the needs of these learners. It is difficult for schools to

ignore a seventh or eighth grader who scores better than the average high school student on the SAT. The talent search has often galvanized parents to join together to lobby for better services for gifted children at their local schools.

In addition, the talent search has been the impetus for colleges and universities across the country to offer special programs for students. All of the regional talent searches are based at universities and conduct programs for pre-college students. These have been replicated at many other institutions and a host of different types of programs have been developed.

In an effort to serve talent search participants, many collaborations have formed between universities and school districts. For example, the Chicago Public Schools utilizes area universities to offer fast-paced classes for students identified by the SAT. Collaboration between the Ingham County schools in Michigan and Michigan State University (MSU), in the development of four programs for talent search participants, led to the establishment of an Office of Gifted and Talented Programs at MSU. And a collaborative arrangement among school districts in Kalamazoo, Michigan, allowed students to attend an accelerated math program at Kalamazoo College. The program has been replicated at three other colleges in Michigan.

It is difficult for schools to ignore a seventh or eighth grader who scores better than the average high school student on the SAT.

Talent search has brought important issues to the attention of educators, issues that have ramifications for all learners, not just academically talented ones. For example, because talent search participants now regularly take courses at universities and colleges, the issue of credit for those courses has become important. Some states, e.g., Indiana, have passed legislation that allows students to receive high school credit for coursework completed outside of their local school. Thus, all students have additional opportunities and additional incentives to partake of them.

Talent search has helped to reform and set standards for curricula in local schools and districts. Because so many students are taking algebra or literature in the seventh or eighth grade, schools have been forced to review the curriculum and "up-grade" it for grades one through six. Similarly, as more and more students take advanced courses early, high schools have had to offer additional choices or make arrangements for students to take college classes in their last years of high school.

Talent search has also provided a large group of academically talented students to study. Significant research efforts exist at all of the institutions that conduct regional talent searches. Major longitudinal studies of the achievements of various subgroups of talent search participants have been undertaken by SMPY. These studies have provided a great deal of information about these individuals' development and have alerted the broader community of scholars to the capabilities and needs of talented children.

The Future of Talent Search

Talent search programs face certain challenges in the near future. Currently, many educators believe that standardized tests are inadequate measures of achievement because there appears to be a disparity between what these tests measure and what is required for competent functioning in the real world. Assessments of achievement should mirror the activities and standards of professionals in the real world (Wiggins, 1989). In response to this and financial pressures, some school districts are abandoning the use of standardized achievement tests or using them only at certain grades. This may make entry into the talent search more difficult and challenges talent search programs to develop alternative means of finding qualified participants.

Talent search programs have moved gifted education forward in many significant ways. A web of services and programs for students has been built upon the talent search base. And talent searches have been a stable force in education for over a decade. It is doubtful whether we will see such a simple yet elegant embodiment of good educational practice influence so many students and aspects of education again.

REFERENCES

Benbow, C.P. (1992). Academic achievement in mathematics and science of students between ages 13 and 23: Are there differences among students in the top one percent of mathematical ability? *Journal of Educational Psychology, 84*, 51-61.

Burton, N.W. (1988). *Young SAT-takers: Two surveys. Survey II: Test-taking history for 1980-81 young SAT-takers.* College Board Report No. 88-1. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

Ebmeier, H. & Schmulbach, S. (1989). An examination of the selection practices used in the talent search program. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 33*, 134-143.

Silverman, L.K. (1986). The IQ Controversy: Conception and misconceptions. *Roeper Review, 8*, 136-140.

VanTassel-Baska, J. (1986). The use of aptitude tests for identifying the gifted: The talent search concept. *Roeper Review, 8*, 185-199.

Wiggins, G. (May, 1989). A true test: Toward more authentic and equitable assessment. *Phi Beta Kappan, 70*, 9.

Wilder, G & Casserly, P.L. (1988). *Young SAT takers: Two surveys. Survey I: Young SAT takers and their parents.* College Board Report No. 88-1. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, Ph.D., is acting director of The Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University which runs the Midwest Talent Search. She has been active in the field of gifted education for over 10 years.

The Name "Talent Search"

In a sense the tag *talent search* is a bit of a misrepresentation, since none of the four regional talent search organizations has the history or uses the method of, say, the Westinghouse Science Talent Search, which has operated for decades and uses a system of graded competitions. The term is also applied to projects centered at major land-grant universities, like Arizona State University, Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and California State University, Sacramento. Although there are significant overlaps in method and philosophy between these projects and the regional talent searches, the four regional talent searches at Duke, Northwestern, Denver, and Johns Hopkins are distinguished by history, by scope of programs, and by their confederated efforts in identification and educational programming.

In a sense the term *talent search* refers to a single aspect of each of the regional organizations: the major "identification" activity, or the middle-school talent search.

"Out-Of-Level" Testing

Following the lead of work done in the mid-1970s by Dr. Julian Stanley of The Johns Hopkins University, the four regional talent searches systematically find middle-school students who score exceptionally well on nationally normed standardized tests and then offer these students the opportunity to take either the American College Testing Program's ACT or the *Scholastic Assessment Test* (SAT-1), which is a revised and renamed version of the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* (SAT). According to the designers of the test, the SAT-1 measures the same thing as the "old" unnumbered SAT. The talent search students will first take the new SAT-1 in 1994-1995.

Of course, these tests were designed for students planning to enter college, and typically high school juniors and seniors take the SAT-1 and/or the ACT. In effect, the talent search organizations ask students of exceptional ability to take the tests about five years before they would "normally" take them, because the tests are appropriate for the young students by intellectual ability, though not by age. Because of the age disparity between the high school students for whom the tests were designed and the age of the middle school students who take the tests in the talent search, the SAT-1 and ACT are called "out-of-level" tests for the talent search students.

During the past 15 years, about one million students have taken part in at least one of the talent search programs.

Even though talent search students take the SAT-1 or ACT five years before most of the other test-takers, they nevertheless do quite well. As a matter of fact, a good number of the talent search students actually *outscore* the older students for whom the tests are age-appropriate. Overall, between one-quarter and one-third of the students in the Duke University TIP Talent Search score as well or better than the average college-bound senior —and they do this when they have not yet completed the seventh grade. Results are similar in the talent searches run by Northwestern's Center for Talent Development (CTD), the University of Denver's Rocky Mountain Talent Search (RMTS), and The Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth (CTY).

The regional talent search system has several advantages, not the least of which is its straightforward operation. Students meeting the talent search eligibility criteria simply apply to the talent search organization and subsequently register with the testing agency. (Paula Olszewski-Kubilius' article in this issue of *Understanding Our Gifted* provides more detailed information on eligibility criteria for the talent searches and on the research basis for the programs.) Both the ACT and the SAT-1 have well established testing centers throughout the nation, making travel to a test site quite easy. Moreover, their Saturday testing dates do not interrupt school schedules. Both of the tests are fairly well known, a fact which allows school personnel to make quick sense of test results. And, since the regional talent searches have been operating for nearly 15 years, the testing agencies and the talent search programs have streamlined their processes so that students and their parents promptly receive test results and other materials. A seventh grader registering with a talent search program in the fall can test in December, January or February, get an individual score report from the testing agency about six weeks after testing, and have interpretative information in April—in time for planning the following academic year's coursework. If that student scores well enough, she might choose to attend an intensive summer program in June.

Educational Programs

Each of the regional talent searches runs summer programs for students who have been through the talent search process. In the main, these programs are geared toward students achieving at high levels on the ACT or SAT (or, soon, the SAT-1), though each of the talent search programs makes educational experiences available to all students participating in the searches.

Intensive summer residential programs take place on several college campuses throughout the nation. The Johns Hopkins University's CTY offers programs at sites in California, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. Duke University TIP runs programs in North Carolina, Virginia, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas—some of which are specialized scientific field research programs. Northwestern University's CTD offers a comprehensive set of five programs for talented students beginning in the sixth grade and extending to the post-graduation year. The University of Denver's RMTS offers a two-week program for rising sixth to eighth graders and a three-week program for rising ninth through eleventh graders. Duke's TIP and Johns Hopkins' CTY each have programs overseas, with TIP's programs taking place in six countries on two continents.

The summer residential programs share certain characteristics. All of them provide talented students with opportunities for academic acceleration, especially in mathematics. All of them use SAT or ACT scores to determine eligibility; students are eligible if they have achieved, in seventh grade, scores roughly corresponding to average scores for college-bound seniors. Duke's TIP has higher eligibility scores than the other talent search programs, however. All of the programs offer a broad range of courses, and they tend to model their offerings after liberal arts curriculum. These are *not* just programs for students interested in science and mathematics, though parents often misconstrue the programs as only for youngsters with high math ability.

Elementary School Projects

The talent searches have recently begun offering services to students in elementary schools. In 1994, all of the regional talent searches offered talent identification services throughout their respective talent search regions. [See map on p. 13.] Like the middle-school talent searches, the elementary school process has eligibility criteria based on grade level and achievement or intelligence test scores. TIP's Motivation for Academic Performance (MAP) Program does not require testing for students to participate fully, though follow up testing is offered as an optional service to the students and their families. TIP's efforts in the MAP program focus on providing information and guidance to gifted students and their families, and MAP has been designed with direct, locally based services in mind. For the other talent search organizations, a follow up test is mandatory, and participation in a commuter or residential educational program is an option.

CTY has run educational programs for talented elementary school students for seven years, but has only recently begun programming residential programs for this age group. The other regional talent searches are building similar services for elementary school students.

Presuppositions and Commitments

Although I can write most authoritatively about TIP's perspective in particular, the talent searches have crafted programs and services around certain suppositions about academic talent. The basic suppositions are:

1. Academically talented children have special needs that should be met. The sooner needs are met the better for the development of the child.

2. Normed standardized tests serve a useful purpose in the identification of highly talented individuals, even though such instruments cannot claim to identify talented individuals exhaustively.

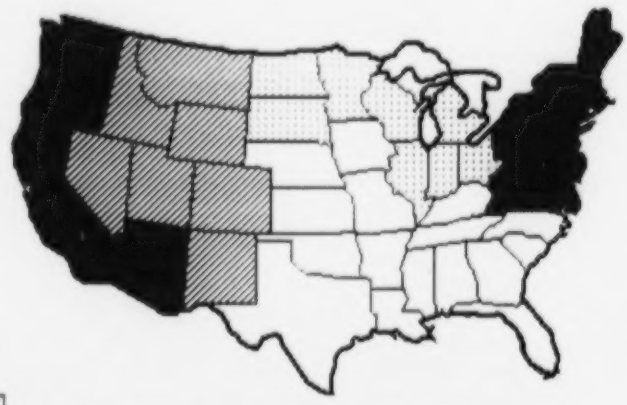
3. Programs and services for highly talented individuals have a better chance of being successful when they build on strengths in the individual and, organizationally, on the strengths of institutions. This principle especially applies to TIP's academic programs, but it also animates the advice we at TIP give to students. So, in the case of college selection, TIP advises students to look at their distinct preferences and abilities first and then seek an "optimal match" in a college.

4. The acceleration model for academic programs is useful and is often the *preferable* model to use in programs for academically talented students, especially in fields of study with well-defined curricula such as mathematics. The emphasis of precollegiate academic programs should be on mastery of knowledge and on building the foundation for high-level study.

5. The talent search programs perform a service to more of the population than just the highly talented, for by improving the understanding of talent, they play a role in developing talent generally.

Some of these points are controversial, as advocates for gifted children know. Gifted education in the broad sense is under attack either because it is deemed "elitist" or because it simply falls victim to education budget cuts. Some see the notion that gifted children have special *needs* as provocative in itself. Indeed, opponents of gifted education have argued against services for the gifted because such services are interpreted as special *privileges* for a few.

Talent Search Regions



Center for Talent Development (Northwestern University)

Center for the Advancement of Academically Talented Youth (The Johns Hopkins University)

Rocky Mountain Talent Search (University of Denver)

Duke University Talent Identification Program

1994 Educational Opportunity Guide: A Directory of Programs for the Gifted, p. 242. Durham, NC: Duke University Talent Identification Program.

In several states, standardized testing has been modified, and in a few states support for norm-referenced tests has been withdrawn or severely curtailed. In some cases, this is a matter of budget belt-tightening. In other cases, support for standardized testing has waned because of a perception that the tests do not measure "real world" skills and abilities. Beyond this, some states (most notably Kentucky) have refocused their testing programs to serve systemic school reform efforts rather than provide information for individual student assessment.

Criterion-referenced tests have become more popular in some states. But because criterion-referenced tests are designed to determine competence using criteria established independent of anyone's performance on the test itself, criterion-referenced tests do not differentiate students by their abilities relative to each other (as norm-referenced tests do). Criterion-referenced tests can show whether a student has competence in broadly defined skills, but the tests do not rank a student's performance relative to other students' performances on the test. Thus, criterion-referenced tests do not serve very well as a means of identifying students of exceptional ability.

Points three and four—building on strengths and academic acceleration—interrelate. The regional talent searches encourage students to accelerate through precalculus mathematics, for example, if they have a particularly exceptional talent in math. And, in fact, it is the expectation at TIP's summer residential programs that exceptionally gifted students master one precalculus math course over a three-week program. Students accelerate so that they can study more challenging and higher-level topics in their areas of strength.

The talent searches are committed to research, partially because of the fact that they are all housed at universities. TIP's own research and much of that in the field does not lead us to believe that talent development is solely a matter of heredity but is instead greatly influenced by environment. Because TIP believes this, TIP seeks to enrich the environments of talented children through broad distribution of information. Although TIP's programs center on developing talent in children, one of the most important parts of TIP's work is providing information to families, to teachers, and to communities so that each can play a role in developing talent and in helping talents become expressed. We at TIP see an obligation to identify and develop talent among groups that have been neglected—especially among females and under-represented minority groups. Research into the phenomenon of giftedness, we believe, can lead us to practices that actually make expression of talent more likely.

Why University-Based?

Characteristics of the home institutions of the talent search programs certainly shape the organizations. It is no accident that the four regional talent searches are located at private institutions which picture themselves as serving at least regional constituencies.

TIP is a case in point. Based at Duke University, which pictures itself as having a national, if not international, constituency, TIP aims to serve *regions*, though its programs are significant at the state and local levels as well. Since it is not part of a single state or local education agency, TIP has freedoms that are not available to

other educational agencies and can at times perform an integrative function for those agencies. The talent searches are designed to be readily available to students across a multi-state search region, and the consequences of participation in the talent searches are similar from state to state and from talent search region to talent search region.

The fact of calling a university home means paying special attention to research and evaluation for the sake of discovering new knowledge. As such, research conducted by the talent search organizations is also required to benefit scholarly communities at universities, although this research certainly benefits students by serving as a basis for improving programs. Also, as a university-based program for precollege students, the talent search programs serve as bridges between secondary and post-secondary institutions.

Animated by commitments to service and research, the regional talent searches have roles to play in informing policy makers about educational issues of gifted students and in providing services directly to gifted students and their families. This breadth of activity makes the regional talent searches increasingly important resources for our nation and for every family with gifted children.

Somewhere, Somehow, Someday

Somewhere there is a wilderness
Where nothing is tame
It is a struggle for survival here
It has only been seen by the native Indians
And perhaps a few men who wandered off course
They may have seen it just before the last flame
Of life was blown out

Somehow this place has been forgotten
We have moved over it with our massive developments
And factories... Oh yes, big factories
And out of each large tower there is smoke that rises
And each little bit is hurting us
Not anybody in particular but every plant and animal
We all live together on this earth so we must think

Someday the last tree in this place will be cut...Unless
We have hope and work together

Robert F. Theobald, Age 10

Contact Addresses:

Duke University TIP
Box 90747
Durham, North Carolina 27708-0747
919/684-3847
FAX: 919/681-7921

Center for Talent Development (CTD)
Northwestern University
617 Dartmouth Place
Evanston, Illinois 60208
708/491-3782

Center for Talented Youth (CTY)
The Johns Hopkins University
3400 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218
410/516-0337

Rocky Mountain Talent Search (RMTS)
University of Denver
Wesley Hall
2135 East Wesley
Denver, Colorado 80208
303/871-2533

Mark R. Delong, Ph.D., is Director of Operations at Duke University TIP and co-author of ***What's a Parent To Do?*** and ***Options for Parents of Bright Teenagers.***

Please send me:
___Vol. 1: *"Positive Disintegration"*
___Vol. 2: *"Models of Integration"*
___Vol. 3: *"The Possible Human"*
___Vol. 4: *"The Self"*
___Vol. 5: *"Valuing the Feminine"*
___Vol. 6: *"Becoming Authentic"*

ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT: A Journal on Adult Giftedness

Gifted children usually have gifted parents. If you are wondering about your own giftedness, subscribe to *Advanced Development: A Journal on Adult Giftedness.* No other journal focuses specifically on gifted adults. Unlike the traditional view of adult giftedness as high levels of productivity and creativity, advanced development in adults is defined as the deepening of the personality and strengthening of human values such as empathy, concern for others, responsibility and integrity.

Volume 6 on *Becoming Authentic* Now Available

TO ORDER: Fill out and return this form to the Institute for the Study of Advanced Development, *1452 Marion Street, Denver, CO 80218 or call (303) 837-8378. This journal is published annually and is available at a cost of $20 each ($30 for Institutions; Canadian/Foreign, $25 payable in U.S. funds).* ***Special Offer: $15 each for two or more journals.***

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ *STATE* _____ *ZIP* _____

Kathi Kearney

THE HIGHLY GIFTED

Talent Searches and the Highly Gifted

The national talent searches are an essential resource for highly gifted students. Initiated by The Johns Hopkins University more than two decades ago and now administered by several centers nationwide, the talent searches constitute the largest research database in the world about highly gifted adolescents. For many students, the test used in the 7th grade Talent Search, the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT-1), is their first opportunity *ever* to be assessed on a test with a ceiling high enough to measure their abilities. Furthermore, many of the sponsoring universities offer intense, academically rigorous, fast-paced residential summer courses for qualifying students, providing many highly gifted adolescents their first social and academic experiences with others as bright or brighter than they are.

The talent searches are an unqualified success. Yet many gifted young adolescents don't participate, especially those from working-class and lower-middle-class families. These families are not poor enough to qualify for a fee waiver, but not always wealthy enough to part with the $41 registration and SAT fees*, either—especially when the choice may be to pay for one child to take a test, or use the money to buy school shoes at a discount store for other children in the family. Another major reason for nonparticipation among students of all socioeconomic levels is that they simply don't know about the talent searches. Talent search materials are generally mailed to schools. If the school doesn't have a gifted program, doesn't believe in acceleration, or doesn't offer students access to information about private educational opportunities, qualified students may never know that the talent searches exist.

Fortunately, there are many things that schools, families, communities, and the talent searches themselves can do to assure greater participation—thus ensuring that more highly gifted students will be identified and served.

What Schools Can Do

1. Obtain and distribute information and applications for the talent search serving students in your area (see page 14 in this issue for addresses).

2. Administer a sample SAT to qualified students. Multiple copies of this sample test are available free to every high school guidance office. This will allow you to identify and encourage students who are likely to score well on the SAT, but are less likely to participate in the talent search without direct intervention.

What Families Can Do

1. Check your child's school records to see if he or she qualifies to participate in the talent search. Most require achievement test scores in *either* math *or* reading, *or* a composite score at the 97th, 98th, or 99th percentile on the most recent or *next-most-recent* achievement test.

2. Obtain information about the talent search yourself (see page 14 for addresses).

3. Administer the sample SAT test at home, under standard test conditions.

4. Don't miss talent search or SAT registration deadlines.

5. When appropriate, share SAT results with your child's school.

What Community Organizations Can Do

1. Provide funds for talent search entrance fees and scholarships for summer programs.

2. Publicize talent search information in community publications.

What the Talent Searches Can Do

1. Understand the economic realities of lower-middle-class and working-class families. These students don't qualify for fee waivers, but the cost of participating in the talent search is often a real burden. The talent searches need to make greater efforts to reach out to these families and to show them the long-term value of participation.

2. Issue more press releases nationwide, so families whose schools choose not to participate can contact the talent searches directly.

3. Increase financial aid for summer programs, or help establish more community partnerships dedicated to doing this.

Many barriers to talent search participation disproportionately affect working-class and lower-middle-class youth, those from isolated rural areas, and students whose schools have eliminated gifted programs for economic and political reasons. These are the students who often need the talent searches the most. It is incumbent upon all of us to make this information available to them.

*Combined 1993 fee for SAT and Talent Search registration through the Center for the Advancement of Academically Talented Youth (CTY), The Johns Hopkins University. Fees at other centers may vary.

Kathi Kearney is founder of the Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children in South Casco, Maine, a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University, and Editor of *Highly Gifted Children*.

Mary Lynn Baum

from parent to parent

Kathleen Rogers first became involved in talent search programs in the early 1980s, when her son participated in two major talent searches and their summer programs. Since that time she has followed their development with particular interest as both a parent and an educator.

Kathleen attests to the value of the talent searches, and especially their summer programs: *The most obvious benefit is the opportunity to study challenging material with true academic peers and the subsequent academic guidance in the student's home school,* she writes. *The opportunity not only to take such courses in their major talent area but to balance these with courses in other areas is also very important.*

The emphasis shouldn't be solely on these academic aspects, however. *Also important,* she writes, *are the maturing of life away from home (doing one's own laundry!) and interaction with others in the dorm. A strong element is the important and deep friendships made in the summer programs. This is especially true of students returning for a second, third, or fourth year. Students find a place where their humor, interest, "gifted personalities" are at home, in a way not often available in their home towns.*

Kathleen feels that the most important changes that have taken place over time have been in the awareness of "the whole child" and the complexities arising from their asynchronous development. *Early on, the programs did not always seem to remember that the students were children. Granted that their main purpose was providing accelerated and appropriate academic experiences, there sometimes could have been sensitivity to developmental issues and individual differences in style and personality. There was some expectation that the same pacing, teacher style, and courses were appropriate for all students of a given aptitude score.*

There was also sometimes a lack of recognition that exceptional ability in a domain doesn't necessarily mean that will be the individual's area of choice or the area of greatest strength in the long run. For example, our son, who early on scored very high in math, later scored even higher in verbal and is now a graduate student with a prestigious fellowship in the humanities.

Kathleen notes, however, that over time sensitivity to these issues has grown. *I'm glad to see that programs have become more nurturing and more aware of the overall psychological development of individual students, and that most, if not all, now include a counseling component as a matter of course.*

As the programs continue to evolve, Kathleen has some hopes for future directions. She would like to see even further awareness on the part of staff and faculty of these psychological developmental issues. She would also like to see a more conscious emphasis on self-understanding and self-acceptance. *Being in these summer programs can facilitate self-acceptance and self-esteem by giving them an opportunity to be with students like themselves in advanced classes and in campus life,* she writes. *They also provide a unique opportunity to consciously incorporate some affective education in the overall program.*

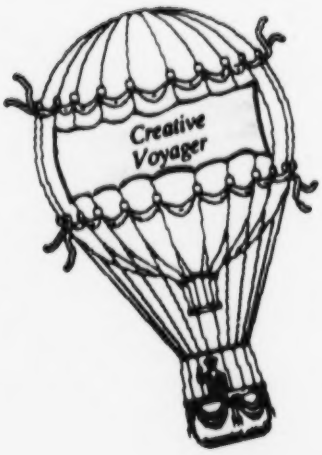
Kathleen would also like to see greater collaboration between educators and parents and more appreciation of the parents' role in knowing and working with their child. *As wise and invaluable as the guidance is that we receive from the talent searches, parents know their children as no one else can, in all their uniqueness—their maturity, response to competition, comfort with their giftedness.* She would also like to see a mechanism for parents of program students to network: *While family and individual values differ, experiences with the difficult decisions involved in guiding these unique students could be of help to other parents.*

Having experienced the talent search programs, growing pains and all, over this extended time, Kathleen expresses deep appreciation for the programs and for those who nurtured their development. For those whose lives they have touched, the talent search programs have made an important difference.

Mary Lynn Baum is past president of the Gifted Children's Association of British Columbia, Canada, editor since 1983 of its newsletter ***Bright Connections***, and the parent of a highly gifted teenager.

IN SEARCH OF SERENDIPITY

Fairy Tales, Part III



Creative Ventures And Encounters

Jerry Flack

Tour Guide

Imagination is more important than knowledge, for knowledge is limited while imagination embraces the entire world.

Albert Einstein

Einstein understood the importance of imagination and once prescribed fairy tales as the best reading for youngsters who aspired to careers in science. He appreciated the fertile ground fairy tales offer for stretching the imagination and fostering creative growth in young people. On this voyage, we will examine traditional fairy tale characters in a contemporary light.

The creative thinking abilities of *fluency, flexibility, originality*, and *elaboration* may be taught and reinforced using fairy tale characters and contents. Both fluency and entrepreneurial skills receive attention when students simulate business planning and engage in developing and stocking the nation's first all-children's mall, Cinderella City. Students can brainstorm the kinds of businesses they will invite to participate in their venture. New mall tenants might include Rapunzel's Hair Care, Little Red's Candy Basket, Alice's Card Shop, and Prince Charming's Formal Wear. While the entrepreneurs are busy concocting capital-raising schemes and planning the grand opening festivities, the class architects can generate blueprints for the mall, and the designers can draw interior sketches for each of the mall's new businesses.

Students may also exercise fluency skills in generating many ideas for a newspaper based on a fairy tale motif or design that will herald the opening of the new mall. What kinds of newspaper news items, weather forecasts, sports stories, advice columns, classified advertisements, and stock market reports can be fashioned from fairy tale data? Once students have generated many possible ideas, the class journalists can create a delightful and highly original edition of *The Black Forest Times*. The top news story will no doubt be about the opening ceremonies for the new Cinderella City Mall.

Flexible thinkers can help Goldilocks stock her new gift store, the Bears' Cottage. What are all the different kinds of merchandise Goldilocks could sell? What are all the different and creative ways that she might advertise her store in *The Black Forest Times*?

Additional flexible thinkers may create several different advertising brochures for the many mall stores that can then be delivered to citizens by the Jolly Postman.

Originality is utilized by students who create a new line of greeting cards based on fairy tale themes to be sold in Alice's Card Shop at the Cinderella City Mall. What fairy tale themes, characters, and allusions can they use to celebrate birthdays, births, marriages, holidays, graduations, and other special occasions?

Students will use elaboration in developing the kernel idea of a fairy tale calendar into a gorgeous product Alice can give to her most loyal customers for the new year. Students can create a 12-month calendar with a fairy tale motif. They might, for example, choose to concentrate on the houses of 12 fairy tale characters. Each of the 12 picture panels drawn would depict a different home associated with a classic fairy tale character. Other themes might be the bedrooms, diets, or wardrobes of fairy tale characters.

(Continued on page 18)

My Best Summer by *Michael Leviton*

Not only did I not want to go, I dreaded the horrible truth that had befallen me.... I had to go to summer camp. Not even summer camp, a program called CTY where I would take writing classes for three weeks and stay at a college. I figured it would be like taking school over the summer, but even after the first day, I knew it was going to be the best summer I have ever had.

Definitely the best thing about CTY is being on your own, without annoying brothers and sisters or parents to bug you. The Center for Talented Youth (CTY) is a division of The Johns Hopkins University that offers classes for junior high school students from all over the world. I lived in a dorm with a roommate for three weeks at Loyola Marymount University in California.

It seemed to me like everybody would be homesick at a place like this, but they kept us so busy, we forgot all about it. They have all kinds of activities from sports to discussions about aliens to testing if you have ESP. If I didn't feel like doing anything, I was perfectly free just to hang out.

I met all kinds of people that I still talk to and after the puny few weeks I knew them I felt like I'd known them forever. I now have friends in Pennsylvania, Oregon, New York, Germany, Canada, and Australia. I even have new friends here in California.

The CTY classes are great, too. It's not even close to anything like school because the teachers are much less dominant than the students so the students run things more or less. It was more like a club where we would share each other's writing and get criticisms. I wrote some of my best writing there.

I think CTY completely changed my outlook on everything. I used to try and fit in and be like everybody else but CTY taught me that I could be my own person and be as wacky or crazy as I want to be, people would still like me and if they don't, I don't care. I'm much happier now and have more friends than before. I realized that a lot of people I used to like really weren't worth liking and made new friends. One of my favorite movies is called "Heathers" and in it Winona Ryder describes my old friends perfectly. She said, "They don't seem like friends, they seem more like business associates and our job is being popular and stuff." That's all I really used to care about. Beyond all costs I wanted to be popular. Now I realize that the way you get popular is by being yourself and if people don't like you, it doesn't matter.

In conclusion I say that CTY wasn't only good while I was there but was still good after. I'm a much better person than before and CTY is the main reason.

Michael Leviton is 13 years old and an eighth grader at the Sepulveda Gifted Magnet in Granada Hills, California.

FAIRY TALES continued from page 17

The bank at the mall is managed by the giant of Jack and the Beanstalk fame. That pesky fellow Jack keeps trying to take the gold from the giant's bank. The giant is angry and believes he should put a stop to Jack's raids on the bank's treasury. Ask students to invent a security system that will make the bank burglar proof.

A multi-plex movie theatre will be a feature of the Cinderella City Mall. What are the titles of the six movies that will play during the grand opening of the mall? Commission creative students to author a screenplay for a movie version of a brand new fairy tale. Students should mention or include some of the following items in the scenarios they create for their new fairy tales:

- parking meter
- hungry mouse
- blue satin pillow
- white rose
- black cat
- football
- red hat
- copper key

The climax of the grand opening of the Cinderella City Mall will be a magnificent dinner attended by the President of the United States and the following fairy tale characters: Little Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks, the Steadfast Tin Soldier, Snow White, Hansel and Gretel, Rapunzel, Cinderella (of course!), the Seven Dwarfs, Sleeping Beauty, the Three Bears, Prince Charming, Jack (without beanstalk), and Puss in Boots. Ask the student gourmets in the classroom to plan the menu for the dinner feast. Artistically creative students can design the table decorations and papier mache masks for each of the guests to wear. Others students can create a script and program for the gala speeches and entertainments to be enjoyed by the honored guests. All the students can assume the many roles, wear the appropriate masks, and stage the gala affair as a finale to this voyage to the incredibly creative new mall, Cinderella City. This activity provides a wonderful opportunity to develop a variety of student talents.

Jerry Flack, Ph.D., is a President's Teaching Scholar and Professor of Gifted Education at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, and the author of several books, including *Inventing, Inventions, and Inventors* and *Lives of Promise.*

Dorothy Knopper

ANTENNA . . . .

Current Developments in Gifted Education

Recently I jogged past a lavender pasqueflower—the first wild bloom to pop out this spring. It looked lonely and fragile, but in reality it was strong and tenacious. For several mornings I observed it, sometimes beaten down by fresh snow, sometimes closed up tight against dark unfriendly skies. But it always reopened to the sun's encouragement, as if to proclaim, "I'm here! Nurture me. Fulfill my needs, and I'll grow."

Of course, I saw in this flower the analogy of a child with special needs, waiting patiently for a teacher to meet those needs and help that child to grow. I carried the example a bit further and visualized a gifted child beaten down by repeated drill and lack of challenge closing up tight against a system that doesn't seem to understand that special child.

When I jog, my thoughts wander freely, and my stream of consciousness moves from flower to child to the entire gifted education movement. I see it initially emerging in triumph, battered by lack of funding and commitment, closed tightly against hostility and misunderstanding, and eventually—tenacious and strong—reopening and flourishing with the resurgence of understanding and hope.

It is spring, and many flowers bloom. Hopefully, this is a time of renewal for our vulnerable field of gifted and talented education. If we recognize talent in our young people and nurture it, they, too, can blossom.

A tenth grade student from Wisconsin shares her talent in the following poem:

Gift of Knowledge
for the knowing to come
Slowly new
An emergence.
rising from what
had been a silt silence
justly fitting the corners
and curves of
an emptiness no one
had ever
known was
there.
With the permanence of a stone wall
grown to kiss the line of earth and sky
borne beneath the giving hands of
many teachers
now
only joy in
this arrival at existing
at first tasting of the light.

Binta Jeffers, Age 15

Dorothy Knopper, M.A., is a private consultant for gifted education in Colorado, author of ***Parent Education: Parents as Partners***, and publisher of ***Understanding Our Gifted.***

UNDERSTANDING OUR GIFTED
ORDER FORM

❑ Start my subscription to ***Understanding Our Gifted.*** Enclosed is payment of $30.00 per year for 6 issues; **institutions $35.00.** International $40.00 U.S. funds; international institutions $45.00 U.S. funds.

❑ VISA ❑ MASTERCARD
Card # _____
Expiration Date _____
Signature _____

Name _____
Institution _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Country _____

Make checks payable to: Open Space Communications, Inc., 1900 Folsom, Suite 108, Boulder, CO 80302, U.S.A.
(303) 444-7020 / FAX (303) 545-6505